



Abandoned Lot to Family Resource Center—Partnering for Education in Chicago

Chicago, IL

November 2001 marked the opening of the North Lawndale Family Resource Center's new facility, where staff began caring for and educating more than 200 children in Chicago's West Side. Employing 50 people, the new \$3.6 million facility was constructed on an abandoned one-acre lot that was formerly the site of an auto repair shop and other industrial uses.

Redeveloping this site demanded the skills and resources of multiple federal partners and other organizations, including Chicago's Department of the Environment (DOE). Using funds awarded to the city as a part of its selection as a Brownfields Showcase Community by the Brownfields National Partnership in September 1998, DOE was able to fund a site investigation report and cleanup plan, which helped move the property through the Illinois Site Remediation Program (SRP). Additionally, the partnership between EPA and the state played an important role. EPA provided \$1.1 million to the state over the last five years for outreach and equipment purchases to support the Illinois SRP.

Showcase Communities are selected by the Brownfields National Partnership to demonstrate that through cooperation, federal, state, local, and private efforts can be concentrated around brownfields to restore these sites, stimulate economic development, and revitalize communities. Showcase Communities serve as models for broad-based cooperative efforts to support locally based initiatives. Showcases receive up to \$400,000 from EPA for both environmental assessments and to support the loan of a federal employee to the Showcase for up to three years. Showcase Communities receive additional financial and technical support from the Partnership's more than 20 federal partners, depending on the community need and program eligibility.

The Lawndale Christian Development Corporation (LCDC) first identified the city-owned Ogden Avenue property in a plan for neighborhood development. Recognizing the need for quality day care in the area, LCDC contacted the Illinois Facilities Fund (IFF), a not-for-profit organization that provides financing and real estate services to other social service agencies. The two organizations then approached the city seeking assistance in acquiring and cleaning up the site and funding construction of the day care center. Chicago's DOE responded by investigating and cleaning up on-site contamination and obtaining a release of liability from the state. Municipal funds supported sampling



One of Chicago's brownfields, following cleanup and prior to redevelopment.

JUST THE FACTS:

- Chicago's DOE investigated and cleaned up on-site contamination, and obtained a release of liability from the state.
- With the state's No Further Remediation letter in hand, the developer secured more than \$1 million in private loans.
- In addition to the North Lawndale Family Resource Center project, the City of Chicago is overseeing assessment and cleanup activities at 28 brownfields spanning more than 480 acres.

Brownfields Showcase Community funds enabled a site investigation report and cleanup plan that helped move a former industrial site through the Illinois Site Remediation Program (SRP). EPA has provided \$1.1 million to the state over the last five years for outreach and equipment purchases to support the Illinois SRP.

and removal of soils and underground storage tanks, while EPA funds awarded through the federal Showcase Community program funded the site investigation report and cleanup action plan required by the Illinois SRP. While the amount of EPA funds used in the project was relatively small, the funds filled a critical gap in project financing. Furthermore, the release of liability that resulted from the site investigation report and cleanup plan allowed for private sector financing for the rest of the project that otherwise would have been nearly impossible to obtain.

With the state's No Further Remediation letter in hand, LCDC secured private loans in the amount of \$1.1 million. The balance of the funds needed for construction came from a variety of public sources, including the city's Community Development Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), federal Empowerment Zone funding, and contributions from the Department of Human Services. Taking into account income levels of the surrounding community, tuition for the center's students will be supported by state child care subsidies and federal Head Start funds.

In addition to the North Lawndale Family Resource Center project, the City of Chicago is overseeing assessment and cleanup activities at 28 brownfields totaling more than 480 acres. Chicago's Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot has already leveraged more than \$57 million from federal and other sources toward these restoration efforts. Chicago has also obtained \$72 million in HUD Section 108 loans for use on the city's brownfields.

The Showcase Community has also fostered partnerships with the National Institute of Environmental Health Services, which provided \$1.3 million toward community assistance, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which offered \$216,000 for technical assistance and staff support. In addition, the Chicago Association of Neighborhood Development Organizations (CANDO) is working with community development groups across the city, including areas targeted by the Showcase Community.

CONTACTS:

For more information on EPA's Showcase Communities, contact Tony Raia of OSWER's Office of Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment at (202) 566-2758

Or visit EPA's Brownfields Web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>